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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000616

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SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 16 BAGHDAD SECURITY PLAN EXECUTIVE
STEERING COMMITTEE

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: At the February 16 Baghdad Security Plan (BSP) Executive Steering Committee (ESC) meeting, Iraqi General Abboud reported that BSP had begun successfully February 14. MNF-I Commanding General (CG) Petraeus cautioned that BSP is still in the early stages and that public expectations should be managed. Iraqi Ground Forces Commander Babakir highlighted Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) problems in obtaining armored vests, helmets and weapons; CG suggested using FMS. Political support committee head VP Abdel Mehdi identified reconciliation-focused legislation as a political priority. FM Zebari briefed on efforts to build regional political support for BSP. GOI officials expressed concern over fuel supplies for electrical generation and for the ISF. End Summary.

Security

[¶2.](#) (C) General Abboud reported that the security side of BSP began February 14 and so far is successful. Abboud recounted several inspection tours he had made of cleared areas, including streets, markets, checkpoints and mosques. He reported that Karkh Maternity Hospital had been cleared and is secure, and he asked the Ministry of Health (MoH) to take steps to provide services there. He also reported that some families had returned to cleared areas and suggested that the BSP media support committee look into whether this would be an appropriate media opportunity.

[¶3.](#) (C) Abboud identified fuel supplies for Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) as a problem. He also asked for more cooperation from officials with personal security detail (PSD) convoys, and asked that the Ministry of Electricity (MoE) to provide more nighttime street lighting.

[¶4.](#) (C) CG Petraeus began the meeting by informing the Prime Minister that the Coalition Forces will call the BSP by the Iraqi name, Operation Fardh al Qanoon. He agreed security operations are off to a good start, adding that USG and GOI officials should remind the public that BSP is in the very early stages, will take several months to be fully in place, and will probably not result in a complete cessation of violence in Baghdad. However, the goal of BSP is to create an environment in which Baghdad residents can resume normal activity, including economic activity. The CG noted that all forces had not yet arrived and emphasized need for full strength units from the Iraqis. CG also recounted his travels during the past week to several areas outside Baghdad, expressing particular concern about the situation in Diyala governorate.

[¶5.](#) (C) The CG stressed that the popular mobilization committees should coordinate with local government using the

existing Neighborhood and District Advisory Councils, rather than trying to create new structures that would duplicate local government.

ISF Supplies

¶16. (C) CG urged that the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Ministry of Defense (MOD) use their FMS funds for equipment and operating costs, and ensure quick, reliable and transparent delivery of supplies to ISF.

¶17. (C) Iraqi Baghdad ground forces commander General Babakir asked for the PM's support in purchasing supplies for ISF, particularly protective vests, helmets, weapons and fuel. The PM said ISF procurement processes for BSP should be expedited; these processes must not be allowed to delay BSP. CG pointed out that vests could quickly be obtained through FMS.

Political Support Committee

¶18. (C) BSP political support committee head VP Abdel Mehdi reported that FM Zebari and Hashim al-Hasseini are developing national and regional BSP political support goals. Abdel Mehdi identified reconciliation as BSP's chief political goal, and several reconciliation measures are now before the Council of Representatives (CoR): constitutional review, de-Ba'athification reform, and hydrocarbons legislation. The VP also urged better implementation of the investment law and consideration of amnesty and detainee releases.

¶19. (C) Abdel Mehdi said he had met with religious authorities in Najaf to urge their support for BSP. FM Zebari would work

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on developing regional support, and Hasseini would work with GOI ministers. Abdel Mehdi announced he planned to travel to Turkey in the next week.

¶10. (C) FM Zebari said he had explained BSP's goals to Jordanian and Saudi officials, who had privately expressed support; Zebari had asked for public statements of support. Zebari said he had received a better reception on his recent trip to Saudi Arabia than on his previous trip. Zebari reported that he is discussing with neighboring states a March 11-12 regional conference in Baghdad. The Baghdad conference was originally intended to be ministerial-level, but due to attendance problems now would probably be at the DFM or envoy level, followed by a second meeting at the ministerial level.

¶11. (C) National Security Advisor Rubaie urged more political focus on the Sunni community to reduce Sunni fears that BSP targets them. He urged Abdel Mehdi to focus on that instead of traveling to Turkey. Rubaie suggested that the political support committee also focus on developing support for BSP in Europe. Next, he expressed disappointment that he did not hear priorities and timelines at this meeting. He also urged the political support committee to draft letters to regional leaders explaining BSP.

¶12. (C) Former DPM Ahmed Chalabi disagreed with NSA Rubaie and said that engagement with Turkey and Saudi Arabia on the new political situation is very important.

Services

¶13. (C) BSP services support committee head DPM Zawbai said his office is working "as one team" with Embassy IRMO Director Saloom and presented a slides showing the status and budgets of ongoing projects (Embassy e-mailed Zawbai's slides to NEA/I February 16).

¶14. (C) Zawbai expressed concern about fuel supplies, noting inefficiencies at one depot. Zawbai said that attempted trash collection in Mansour district had been stopped due to terrorist threats to workers, and asked that the area be secured. Zawbai criticized the Ministries of Agriculture and Transportation as "paralyzed." Zawbai reported that he had visited the Beyji refinery with IRMO Director and found substandard conditions, poor security foremost among them. Zawbai claimed that thousands of Salah ad Din governorate citizens had volunteered to form Iraqi security forces but had not been used. National Security Advisor Rubaie said these problems should be discussed in another forum.

Popular Mobilization

¶15. (C) BSP popular mobilization support committee co-chair Nasr Alaa'ni reported that the committee had overseen the re-opening of a Sunni mosque in heavily Shiite Sadr City in the past week and hopes to re-open another February 17. Alaa'ni reported that the committee is in the process of selecting members for the "popular committees" that Alaa'ni and co-chair Ahmed Chalabi hope will lead the popular mobilization effort. According to Alaa'ni, local government officials in some districts are not the de facto community leaders. VP Abdel Mehdi reiterated that the popular committees must not become "new bodies" to replace government.

¶16. (C) Support committee co-chair Chalabi told the ESC he had received reports of ISF stealing from homes they raided, in particular about special operations group "Battalion 36." General Abboud said he had heard no such complaints; Babakir noted that this battalion only carries out targeted operations, not general sweeps of homes.

¶17. (C) Baghdad Mayor expressed a similarly negative tone and said that the new BSP looks very much like the failed Operation Together Forward from last August. He expressed hope in technical solutions like car scanners to help with roadblocks.
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